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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TBILISI 001523

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/CARC

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [RU](#) [GG](#)
SUBJECT: GEORGIA: SITREP 25: NO CONFIRMATION OF AN ABKHAZ
WALL

REF: A. TBILISI 1513
[B](#). TBILISI 1506

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary. UNOMIG has been unable to confirm press reports of a wall planned by Abkhaz "authorities" along the administrative border. The OSCE was finally allowed to patrol north of Russian checkpoints and came within four km of Tskhinvali, but was again refused access to Akhagori. Political parties signed a "Charter of Political Forces" that sets some ground rules for cooperation, at least while Georgia is still under occupation. The USS Mt. Whitney arrived in Poti with a humanitarian shipment September 5. End Summary.

IS ABKHAZIA BUILDING A WALL?

[1](#)2. (SBU) The press reported that Russian forces and Abkhaz "authorities" were beginning construction of a 3-meter concrete wall along the 80-km administrative border, but a Russian news source quoted General Zaitsev, chief of the Abkhaz "General Staff," as refuting the story. Deputy Minister for Reintegration Rakviashvili told post the government has been unable to confirm the story, but is still investigating. Although the ministry had received reports of actual construction, Rakviashvili suggested one possible explanation is that reinforcement of Russian checkpoints was misinterpreted as wall construction. UNOMIG sources could not verify the story.

[1](#)3. (SBU) The press also reported that Russian forces established a new checkpoint at Teklati, just outside Senaki on the road to Poti, and installed anti-aircraft positions at various checkpoints. Substantial Russian movements into Gali, including 32 tanks, 40 armored vehicles and 50 personnel carriers, were also reported, although UNOMIG sources had no information about such movements.

[1](#)4. (U) Abkhaz press reported that on September 3 "President" Bagapsh appointed Sergei Jonua as "envoy" to the upper Kodori Gorge, where he will also serve as "head of administration," based in Azhara. Another report cited Georgian officials as indicating that Zaza Gurchiani was also appointed "head of administration" in the Kodori Gorge; the relationship between Jonua and Gurchiani is not clear.

OSCE GETS CLOSER TO TSKHINVALI

[1](#)5. (SBU) On September 4 the OSCE was allowed to pass a Russian checkpoint at Karaleti and traveled as far north as a Russian checkpoint at Megvrekisi, a small village four kilometers southeast of Tskhinvali. The OSCE observed less war damage than it expected. It did not receive permission to leave the main road and expected that Russia would be

hesitant to grant such a request. Meanwhile the OSCE was refused access to Akhlagori for a second day and will raise the issue again with Russian General Kulakhmetov. There are now 27 monitors on the ground -- the 8 original, plus 19 of the additional 20. New Deputy Head of Mission Hanne (a German citizen) is expected in Tbilisi shortly.

PARTIES SIGNED POLITICAL CHARTER

16. (SBU) Further to the discussion reported in ref B, representatives of eight parties and two independent members of Parliament agreed on September 4 to a "Charter of Political Forces" (text included below), and signed it on September 5. Parties have three days to sign; after that, they are still free to sign, but will not necessarily be included in the Anti-Crisis Commission. Embassy and other international observers were again present at the discussion.

Text of Charter (Informal translation)

(Begin text.)

Charter of Political Forces

We, Georgian politicians and representatives of political parties, consider that in the conditions of open Russian military aggression, it is important to agree on the main strategic issues of state development.

We believe, consider and once more underline that:

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-- Georgian territorial integrity must be restored and the Russian invading army must leave all territory of the country. Only after this can we start talks about normalizing relations with Russia.

-- Georgia must become a member of NATO and become integrated as closely as possible with the EU. It is important to fulfill the decision of the Georgian people regarding NATO that was made through the plebiscite of January 5, 2008.

-- Georgian internal political processes must stay within the constitutional framework and consider the national security interests of the country.

-- In order to deal with problems created by the Russian invasion, issues of the democratization of the country, the process of reform and creation of an atmosphere of dialogue, there must be created an Anti-Crisis Commission. The terms and conditions of the Commission must be negotiated during follow-up political meetings.

(End text.)

Opposition leader Gachechiladze and representatives of the Republicans, New Rightists and Conservatives did not attend the meeting or sign the MOU. Former Speaker Burjunadze's representative told the group that Burjunadze would make her own statement when she returned to Georgia. (Embassy Note. Burjunadze is currently in the U.S. to attend the U.S. political party conventions. End note.)

VISAS FOR RUSSIANS

17. (U) Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Vashadze announced a simplified visa regime for Russian citizens, according to which visas will be available for \$30 at points of entry.

USS MT WHITNEY PULLS INTO PORT

18. (U) On September 5, the USS Mt. Whitney anchored one mile off the coast of Poti with a shipment of humanitarian assistance, to be delivered through the Port of Poti.

TEFFT